



Minnesota's 4th District **E-Report!**

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

"Serving Minnesota's Families"



SEPTEMBER 27, 2002

Hot News!

McCollum Opposes Medical Malpractice Bill

Representative Betty McCollum voted yesterday to protect the rights of patients. McCollum opposed H.R. 4600, the *HEALTH Act of 2002*, saying the legislation would preempt important Minnesota State patient protection laws. The bill narrowly passed the House by a vote of 217-203.

This legislation should have focused on the skyrocketing costs of medical malpractice insurance. **"I have heard from my doctors about the challenges they face over the significant increases in medical liability insurance premiums. I am concerned that additional costs make it more difficult for physicians to stay in practice. Unfortunately, this bill does nothing to fix the increasing cost of insurance's premiums and goes far beyond its stated purpose of reducing the costs of malpractice insurance, while compromising the health and safety of patients,"** said McCollum.

The overly broad scope of this legislation left patients behind. It would place restrictions on individuals receiving compensation when they are injured by the negligent conduct of health care providers, as well as defective medical products, tainted prescription drugs, and claims against HMO's and health insurance companies.

This legislation would also preempt all current state laws regarding the statute of limitations for actions. **"During my time in the Minnesota House of Representatives, I supported legislation that lengthened the statute of limitations for medical malpractice cases to four years. HR 4600 would require lawsuits to be filed within only three years of the date of injury or only one year after discovery. We need to have a longer statute of limitations to help protect individuals who have diseases with long incubation periods,"** said McCollum.

For example, a patient who contracts HIV from mishandled blood, but does not show symptoms until three years later, could not seek remedy under this new law. These patients deserve the same protections as any other individuals who have been injured by other forms of negligence.

Betty's Key Votes This Week

Voted "Yes" on HJ Res 111- Making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2003, and for other purposes. The bill passed the House by a vote of 370-1.

♦♦♦

Voted "Yes" on HR 2982- Victims of Terrorist Attacks Memorial Act. The resolution passed the House by a vote of 418-0.

"Pic" of the Week



Congresswoman McCollum met with Charlie Weaver, Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. McCollum and Weaver discussed a wide range of safety issues including terrorism, homeland security, and 800 MegaHertz, an enhanced radio system for law enforcement users in Minnesota.

In Betty's Words

"Due to the serious nature of this issue [possible military intervention in Iraq], it is critically important that I am able to read and analyze a final draft of the resolution before I cast my vote. It would be a disservice to my constituents in the 4th District and our armed servicemen and women if I do not treat this resolution with the utmost care and consideration it deserves."

--Excerpt from a statement regarding possible military intervention in Iraq; September 24, 2002

For Your Information

Two fire departments in the Fourth District were awarded grants to enhance their services in the community. The *St. Paul Fire Department* received a grant for \$490,002 for fire operations and fire safety, while the *White Bear Lake Fire Department* received a grant totaling \$25,380 for additional fire prevention programs.

Contact Congresswoman Betty McCollum . . . www.house.gov/mccollum/contact.html

Washington Office: 1029 Longworth HOB, Washington, DC 20515 ♦ phone / (202) 225-6631 ♦ fax / (202) 225-1968

St. Paul Office: 165 Western Ave. N., #17, St. Paul, MN 55102 ♦ phone / (651) 224-9191 ♦ fax / (651) 224-3056

Prepared at government expense.